

Sims (J.M.)

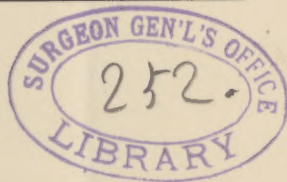
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GUSTAV SIMON.

PROFESSOR GUSTAV SIMON was born at Darmstadt on the 30th of May, 1824. He was educated at Heidelberg and Giessen, taking his medical degree at Giessen. He then accepted the position of military surgeon at Darmstadt. While here, he visited Vienna, Paris, and London for scientific observation. In 1861 he was called to Rostock, where he became professor of clinical surgery and director of the hospital. In 1867 he was chosen professor of clinical surgery in the University of Heidelberg, which he retained till the day of his death. He was repeatedly invited to other universities, but preferred to remain at Heidelberg. In 1866 he was director of the Military Hospital at Moabit near Berlin. In the late Franco-Prussian war he was surgeon-general of the Reserve Barracks of the Grand Duchy of Baden.

In 1851 he published his first treatise on "Gunshot Wounds," containing the results of experimental researches, with original views on the subject.

In 1854 he published a "Description of the Operation for Vesico-vaginal Fistula." In 1862 he published more extended observations on the same subject. And the last paper he wrote was on vesico-vaginal fistula, published only a few weeks before his death.

In 1868 appeared his "Communications from the Surgical Clinic of Rostock." They contain a long series of original

observations, with some "New Methods of Operating in Cases of Incurable Fistulæ," also "Double Puncture and Subsequent Incision in Cases of Abdominal Echinococcus and Hydro-nephrosis," "The Pendulum Method for the Reduction of Dislocated Humerus," "Kolporaphia Posterior for the Cure of Prolapsus Uteri," "Operation for Ruptured Perineum," "Contributions to Plastic Operations of the Face, Vagina, and Rectum," "Hare-lip and Cleft-palate," "On Covering Amputation and Resection Wounds with Diseased and Perforated Skin Flaps," "Treatment of Malignant Disease of the Vagina, Bladder, and Rectum by the Curette, and the Methods of Exposing them sufficiently to View by Using the Sims' Speculum for the Vagina and Rectum."

Among his last contributions to surgical science is his "Method of Rendering the Female Urinary Bladder accessible, and on Probing the Ureter in Women," a paper which, in the short space of six months, has appeared in four different languages. His "Manual Palpation of the Rectum, etc.," is now known and adopted by the profession all over the world. He finished the second part of his great work, on "The Surgery of the Kidneys," but a few days before his death. The third and last part will be laid before the profession in an unfinished state.

Until the last day of his life, he was busily occupied with the arduous duties of his profession.

The foregoing *resumé* of Prof. Simon's labors was furnished by his friend and pupil Dr. A. C. Bernays, of St. Louis, Mo., now in Heidelberg.

When in Europe, last summer, I made a visit from Paris to Germany especially to see Koeberlé at Strassburg, and Simon at Heidelberg. At Baden, I telegraphed to Simon, to know if he was at home, and received as answer: "Yes. Very ill, but most happy to see you." Arriving late, I went to see him at 9 P. M. He was in bed, and received me most cordially. I

remained but a short time, but in ten minutes he arranged a day's work, to begin at 9 the next morning. On my arrival, next morning, I found several young doctors and many patients in the ante-chamber. Simon gave me a real clinical lecture for more than three hours, illustrating his method of operating for vesico-vaginal fistula, lacerated perineum, for exploring the female bladder, probing the ureters, and for exploring the abdominal cavity by passing the hand into the rectum.

It was a hard day's work for a man in good health. But he did not seem to think of himself for a moment. He was wholly absorbed by the pursuit of science for the relief of humanity. His genius, learning, industry, and skill are known and recognized by the profession everywhere; and we call him great. But his qualities as a man could only be realized by personal contact. His earnestness and enthusiasm, his sincerity and honesty, his generosity and kindness of heart, impressed all with the conviction that he was one of the best of men.

I spoke to him of his health. He supposed he had emphysema, with some congestion of the lungs. He was not aware of his real condition, though it was well understood by his friends.

The propriety of withholding from such a man the gravity of his disease seems to me questionable.

He died on the twenty-seventh of August last, of an acute attack of cedema of the lungs, caused by an immense aneurism of the pars descendens of the thoracic aorta, which had greatly compressed the lower half of the left lung and pulmonary veins. The circumstances of his death are curious and interesting. One of his favorite assistants, Dr. Bernays, called, on the morning of the 27th, to read to him the translation of his paper on vesico-vaginal fistula, which he wished to see published in America. He expressed himself as well pleased, and Bernays was about to leave, when Simon, who was in bed, called him back, and said: "Don't forget to send my needle-

holder and some needles to Mr. Marion Sims, and tell him I shall go to the Congress of Gynecologists in America if my health improves."

This was but twelve hours before his death.

At 4 p. m. Dr. Braun, his first assistant, called to report the condition of patients whose after-treatment he was conducting in the hospital for Simon. Simon gave him instructions about having some important cases ready for operation at 11 the next morning. Dr. Braun left at 6 p. m., and he had passed but a few steps from the villa, when Simon was taken suddenly with dyspnœa. He raised himself up in bed, ordered some one to open the window and call Dr. Braun, who hurriedly returned, expecting to find his friend and teacher dead. Simon requested him to call a carriage and go for his tracheotomy instruments as soon as possible. Braun obeyed, and returned in twenty minutes with Dr. Haek. Simon now said: "Operate quickly; perform high tracheotomy." He refused to take an anæsthetic. Dr. Braun operated as quickly as possible. The veins of the neck were greatly distended, and there was consequently some trouble. Simon still hurried him on. There was a good deal of venous hemorrhage, which had to be controlled before the canula could be introduced.

Prof. Simon then said he felt easier, and breathed freer. His pulse kept up till 10 o'clock, when there was a sudden collapse, and he died about midnight. And thus passed away one of the great lights of medicine.

The name of Simon was as well known and as highly honored among us as in his own fatherland. Science knows no boundaries. It is cosmopolitan, and its votaries all over the world are linked together in a common brotherhood. The success of one is the glory of all. The loss of one is a loss to all. Had Simon been an American, we could not have felt his death more keenly, nor mourned him more sincerely.

For a quarter of a century he has been prominently before

the profession, and always as the standard-bearer of an onward movement. His name is the synonym of progress, and his fame will endure for ages.

J. M. S.

